Equality and Human Rights Commission

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Minutes of the Board Call (27 May 2021) on the Race Roadmap

Virtual Meeting held using Cisco Webex videoconferencing services

Present:
Members:

Baroness Kishwer Falkner (Chairwoman)
Caroline Waters (Deputy Chair)
Suzanne Baxter
Jessica Butcher
Pavita Cooper
David Goodhart
Alasdair Henderson
Susan Johnson
Helen Mahy
Mark McLane
Su-Mei Thompson

Officers:

Erica Boardman, Senior Principal: Communications and Engagement
Cath Denholm, Executive Director: Corporate Improvement, Compliance, England and Scotland
Melanie Field, Executive Director: Strategy, Policy, Legal and Wales
Elena Jurado, Principal: Human Rights Monitoring
Alasdair MacDonald, Director: Policy
Callum MacInnes, Principal: Planning, Performance and Governance
Alastair Pringle, Interim CEO
Graham Wheaton, Senior Associate: Planning, Performance and Governance (Secretary)

1. Welcome, Introductions and Apologies for Absence

1.1 Kishwer Falkner welcomed attendees.

1.2 Apologies for absence from Martyn Jones, Baron Bernard Ribeiro and Dr Lesley Sawers were noted.

2. Declarations of Interest

2.1 No declarations were made further to those already registered by Members.

3. Race Roadmap

3.1 Melanie Field spoke to the race Roadmap paper **(EHRC RR.01),** setting out the background that this paper was an update of a document originally published in 2017 which had sought to prompt Government to adopt a cross-Government race equality strategy focused on key areas of concern. The refreshed Roadmap aimed to reflect progress and contemporary challenges. The recently published Commission on Race and Ethnic Disparities (CRED) report provided an opportunity for the Commission to influence the Government's response to CRED, which was expected before the summer recess. There were indications that Government intends its response to set out a strong set of actions that would respond to, and perhaps go beyond, CRED's recommendations. This is therefore a good opportunity for EHRC to prompt Government action on issues we see as the priorities.

3.2 Alongside the Roadmap, we plan to write to Ministers setting out our response to CRED's Recommendation 1 – that EHRC should be given additional funding for our race compliance, enforcement and litigation work.

3.3 Members commented that:

a) Any resource received from Government for work relating to the CRED report must be separate from the Commission's core Grant in Aid funding;

b) There was a significant number of actions contained in the paper and there was a need to prioritise and sequence them and attach value and impact to each with distinct measurable outcomes;

c) The recommendations around Education should be revisited to see if they could be slimmed down or deprioritised;

d) When sharing the paper externally, it would benefit from some visual infographic and/or tabular information providing an ‘at a glance’ overview to be presented;

e) It would be helpful if the paper were re-ordered to reflect the level of priority for each area or divide it between actions that are policy changes and those that would require more significant investment, thus make it easier for Government to engage with the individual recommendations;

f) There was a need to be clear which parts the Commission should work on and which parts were for others to take on board, being clear about who they were;

g) That the Commission needed to ensure that there was adequate baseline data for each recommendation and to understand the change that was wanted;

h) Recognition was needed that race issues were not only between white majorities and minorities but that there were issues between minority groups as well;

i) The Commission should show leadership in respect of the correct terminology to use, for example, avoiding the use of BAME, which was seen to be an unhelpful term;

3.4 The Board agreed that the next iteration of the paper should be reordered and needed a clearer timeframe for the asks. It should include information on what was needed and what were aspirational, early and long term deliverables and what was achievable and by when.

3.5 Members provided detailed comments on a page by page basis and it was agreed that officers should work with the Chairwoman to agree amendments to the paper as discussed during the meeting and then be circulated by correspondence to the Board for agreement.

ACTION: Officers to work with the Chairwoman to amend the paper in light of the comments from the Board and re-circulate the document to the Board by correspondence for approval.

ACTION: Commissioners to provide any further comments on the paper to Melanie by 01 June 2021.

ACTION: Suzanne Baxter to provide Melanie Field a form of words in relation to page 4 to extend the current framework.

ACTION: **Susan Johnson to provide Melanie a form of words in relation to page 5 on local and regional employment charters.**

ACTION: **Kishwer Falkner to provide Melanie a form of words in relation to page 7 Para 33.**

4 Any Other Business

4.1 As it would be his last meeting with Board members, the Chair expressed the thanks of the Board to Alastair Pringle for his hard work and leadership, especially as interim CEO over the last few months.

4.2 The Chair thanked attendees and advised that the next Board meeting was being planned as a face-to-face Board meeting and away day on 7 and 8 July 2021. Plans for this were being developed in light of the latest UK Government guidance and Commissioners would be kept updated.